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cross over to a place called Itea; have a motor trip from there some distance, and then by rail into Athens—a beautiful trip, they say, but it sounds complicated to me with eleven pieces of big baggage to be responsible for, including a case of machine needles and pants' buttons that, because they were badly packed, have thus far marked my trail thither. However, I have begged and implored the hotel porter to fix the cases and trust the moulting process is finished. There are British here, many of them who are as good as gold in speeding us on our way. It is probable we shall go on a French boat to-morrow to Itea—the first one out. Meantime I'm resting up and getting a little writing done.

HELEN SCOTT HAY.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE JOURNAL TO BE GIVEN AWAY

Dear Editor: I have been saving my nursing JOURNALS for seven years, with the intention of having them bound into volumes at some future time, but I find that I shall have to give up this plan, and so shall be very glad to give the entire collection, dating from July, 1912, to some institution that wishes them for its reference library. There are only two or three numbers missing in the entire lot.

7752 Maryland Avenue., Chicago, Ill.

MARY BAHIKY.

RANK FOR NURSES

I.

Dear Editor: Just to tell you that I and all the nurses I ever speak to, sincerely approve of your May editorial, and that this child and a whole lot of others, will *never* volunteer for Army service again without rank. America should be ashamed of the way the nurses were treated in the Army.

Maryland

M. G. T.

II.

It is still too soon to make a judicial decision as to which was success and which was failure in our trials during the war; the main question is, have we come back true and dependable, or have weariness and disillusion set their mark upon us? We have been tried under fire, and our women have stood steadily handling sutures while bombs exploded around them; we have been tried in sinking ships and our women have obeyed orders like veterans; we have been tried in heavy manual labor and our women have proved that their training in cleanliness is genuine; we have been tried in hours of waiting and inactivity,—how have we stood this test? Has its dragging difficulty found us steady and well-poised? We have been tried by the odd customs of a foreign land,—have we been generous and wise in this new relation? We have been tried in close association with each other under uncomfortable conditions,—have we always held ourselves loyal and courteous? Have we been patient as well as brave? One important task before us is to obtain rank for the army nurse. It would be difficult to express the ignorance of military matters possessing the minds of most of the nurses when they answered the call of their country; they were ready and eager to devote themselves to the care of the wounded, and they chafed under what seemed to be unnecessary red tape and trying bureaucracy. Sometimes this was true, and sometimes an inevitable inactivity controlled the situation. War has been the business of kings since history began, and when they went out to war, they left the royal women to weep and wait in their castles; the tasks of the world are distributed differently now. The great

democratic nations have sent armies into the field that excelled the courage and daring of older days, but the traditions of the days of chivalry have left to the armies of to-day many anachronisms, and our nurses found that although they had a definite work to do, they had no definite standing, no opportunity to use their training to the best advantage. According to poetic standards they were ministering angels who were to hover about the beds of suffering heroes,—and it often seemed to us that most of the officers would have felt very glad if the nursing force had been able to spread their angelic pinions and fly to some haven whence they could be summoned when it was time for duty, and so relieve the army from all necessity of dealing with the situation. Some attempted to make the nurses simply manual laborers, but that did not fit either. The nurses must be recognized as intelligent responsible beings, they must accept and carry their part of the hard tasks of war, and it is justice and common sense that relative rank, giving a member of the Army Nurse Corps authority over those who assist her, and responsibility to those who are in command, should be established by law. We want the Army Nurse Corps to be the finest military nursing organization possible, and unless the Chief Nurse has responsibility for the nursing department, its number, its personnel, and its discipline, and her responsibility is recognized by the nurses and by everyone else in the post, no *esprit de corp* can develop. It ought to be that every member of the Corps, whether in Arizona or Siberia or New York should feel herself a unit in the nursing service, and not just one worker in a certain hospital. This can be accomplished for the nurses just as really as it has been for the Marines or any other division of the service, if they are given their responsibility and the chance to carry it. Some officers who are themselves most kindly and courteous and gentle to the nurses have been a hindrance to developing any proper *esprit de corp* because they did not realize that nursing is a grown woman's job, and that the woman who undertakes it is not to be petted and pitied, but given a fair field to use her ability and training in her task. The Chief Nurse should be the member of the Medical Department whose opinion on all matters relating to the personnel and the responsibility for the nursing, is considered as expert advice, and she should be given every possible assistance in carrying out wise plans for her branch of the service. The nurses should be relieved from the necessity of coaxing the orderlies and cajoling the officers, to get the work done. Because in some cases, some individuals have succeeded in doing most excellent work under present conditions is no reason for perpetuating a poor system. Yet I think we need to remember that such conditions as are revealed in the testimony concerning court-martials show the inheritance of the methods of tyrannous kings who used authority without any sense of responsibility and we now have many questions concerning wise discipline for the vast number of men and women who must act in unison to form an efficient military force. There is no doubt whatever of the devotion of the true citizen of a democracy, offering life and service with a devotion no serf ever knew, but he or she finds terrible attrition in working out the actual problem. The need for a just and rational law regarding the status of the military nurse is so great as to be worthy of our most earnest efforts but when the law is passed there will be need of patient, tactful earnestness to make it effectual. It is a matter for professional pride that we have stood together in absolute determination that, whatever the conditions, our soldiers should have the nursing we could give, and if we have learned our lesson well enough to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder, we can accomplish the next task. We have learned that we need good leaders, and

we have learned that it is equally essential to have devoted followers; indeed, in the vast tasks of the world, I believe the earnest endeavor of thousands will find itself triumphing gloriously in spite of vacillating contradictory plans sent out by vague officials.

Boulder, Colo.

MARTHA M. RUSSELL,
Former Representative in France of
the Red Cross Nursing Service.

III.

Dear Editor: I understand that the impression is prevalent and often expressed that the nurses returning from overseas do not generally want military rank. It has been my privilege during my association with the Bureau of Information of the Nursing Service of the American Red Cross to interview between one thousand and fifteen hundred overseas nurses. The subject of military rank for nurses is one that they discuss very freely and frankly with the personnel of this bureau and I find that some of these women have not thought very seriously or definitely on this subject; nor have they analyzed or tried to visualize what military rank would have meant to them in their work and relations with the A. E. F., but they are suffering the same internal pressure, caused by suppressed indignation, over the indefinite and irregular strata that professional women were forced to occupy in a foreign country; they felt not only the lack of protection, but the lack of recognition that they were accustomed to enjoy in civil life at home, and from this fact emanates a great feeling of disappointment in, and lack of respect for, our military organization. These nurses, as well as the majority who have thought on the subject of military rank, are solidly for something, *anything*, that will prevent a repetition of their experiences while trying to serve their country at home and abroad, and during their return voyage; and the majority of these women believe that relative rank is the only solution of this problem.

New York City

R. INDE ALBAUGH,
Chief, Division of Assignment,
Bureau of Information for Nurses.

IV.

Dear Editor: I am, as you know, deeply in sympathy with the effort to obtain actual rank for the members of the Army Nurse Corps. I am however, ready to approve of the measure providing for relative rank, since it is my understanding that because of the large appropriation that actual rank would involve, and possibly for other reasons, it would be difficult for us to obtain a favorable consideration of actual rank for nurses by Congress. Relative rank, I understand, includes the privilege of wearing the insignia. This seems to me the most important provision in relation to rank for, should the question of authority arise, the wearing of the insignia would insure a recognition that the status of the wearer was that of an officer until investigation proved it otherwise. Without it, I see no possibility of the acceptance of the status of the nurse as other than that of the enlisted man, except on the part of the very small number of persons familiar with the written instrument dealing with the matter. I find no justification for rank in a democracy except as an efficiency measure,—the means whereby in the greatest of emergencies there can no question arise as to those in authority. The heavy responsibility involved in the service of the nurse is amply testified to in the paragraph of the Manual of the

Medical Department relating to her status and authority. To impose this responsibility without the outward and visible sign universally recognized as indicating authority is, it seems to me, a grave error as well as an injustice.

Washington, D. C.

ANNIE W. GOODRICH,
Dean, Army School of Nursing.

V.

Dear Editor: As the American Red Cross obtained military rank for all their men in important foreign posts, it is difficult for me to follow their logic in declining to assist their enrolled nurses to obtain the same recognition. If the American Red Cross has so little interest in us as a professional group, is it not time that the American Nurses' Association took over its own enrollment? The United States Army has granted rank to every other important professional group. For us, they have made regulations. When time is limited or authority needed, regulations by no means take the place of the insignia on the shoulder. No other country called for nor was able to put in the field promptly such a large group of graduate nurses for military service. No other country has shown such an utter lack of appreciation of the needs of its nurses in military service nor have the nurses of any other country been subjected to such humiliation as ours have been. They responded promptly to the call of their country and everybody acknowledges that they have rendered a vital national service. Should they not receive, at least, equal recognition to that so freely accorded their Canadian, English and Australian sisters?

New York City

A. M. HILLIARD,
General Superintendent, Bellevue
and Allied Hospitals.

VI.

Dear Editor: The Army Nurse Corps is an essential part of the Medical Department of the Army. It is a body of trained and skilled professional women with well recognized duties and responsibilities in directing and maintaining an adequate nursing system in military hospitals. It is the very essence of military organization that responsibility shall carry with it commensurate authority and that no one depending on other agencies for necessary service shall be without power to command those agencies. Yet there is a steadily accumulating mass of evidence from group after group of nurses returned from overseas service to show how this fundamental principle of military life and work, sustained rigidly as far as men are concerned, is deliberately set aside in the case of the members of the Army Nurse Corps, women who need it from every standpoint even more than men; and there is also a steadily rising tide of indignation not only among nurses but among the friends of nurses at the astonishing delay of the army, and of the medical army authorities in particular, in according to members of the Army Nurse Corps their just and reasonable demand for proper rank and status. On the basis of facts and records there is a history of humiliations and indignities unprecedented in the history of nursing since the Crimean War, and the body of skilled, able and only too devoted women have been left to carry on their important work in the care of the sick and wounded without any real power to ensure control of the resources and agencies needed, or to guarantee courteous and respectful behaviour from those with whom the nurses had to associate in work. If we had striven to

weaken the efficiency and undermine the morale of the members of our nursing service, we could hardly have devised a better way of doing it than by leaving them helpless in the midst of a military world, and nothing but the fineness of our women, and the soundness of their training have saved the day for them in an inherently false situation. Hardships, danger and death they were prepared for, and these they have met with unfaltering courage. They were not prepared to have the army authorities and the medical men fail them. The Bill for Rank recently introduced must pass. Otherwise it should be difficult to induce self-respecting women to remain in the Army Nurse Corps or to enter it.

New York City

M. A. NUTTING,

Director, Department of Nursing and
Health, Teachers College.

VII.

Dear Editor: In seeking rank for nurses, it seems well to consider only that phase of the subject which refers to the more efficient care of the sick. The limitations placed upon the nurse in charge of a ward in a military hospital are many. If she is tactful, amiable, and winning, she may have carried out orders for the nursing care, dependent upon orderlies and hospital corps men. If she is strictly businesslike in giving her instructions, she is likely to find them indifferently executed. Much of the success of the ward is due to the attitude of the officer (doctor) in charge of it. If his chief interest is in the welfare of the patients, he will aid the nurse by insisting that her instructions be carried out. If he is lax, knowledge of the details may escape him, and the nurse is then powerless to secure for the patient that care which he should have. At present, authority regarding the care of the patients in the wards,—exclusive of that of the doctor,—is divided, and the best interests of the sick are thus menaced. For safety, there must be a responsible head; and it is evident the position should be taken by the nurse, who, by training, is best fitted for it. Though rank should, in justice, be given the nurse as her due, yet it is not in the name of justice that we would insist upon it; but for the higher reason that as a ranking officer she can secure better nursing care for the patients in military hospitals.

Newton Lower Falls, Mass.

M. M. RIDDLE,

Ex-chief Nurse, Camp Devens.